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whenever an opportunity may offer, will be foremost among the enemies of the house of Hapsburg. The gallantry with which they had fought, whatever were the defects in their cause, was enough, in the eyes of a generous enemy, to entitle them to surrender with all the honors of war. Austria has wrested the sword from them only to plunge it into their bosoms ; and a constant sense of insecurity for the future, in relation to this part of her dominions, once her bulwark against all foreign foes, will be the appropriate punishment of her cruelty. England committed the same crime or blunder, we care not which it may be called, after suppressing the Irish rebellion of 1798 ; and the consequence is, that Ireland has been in a chronic state of rebellion ever since. When will sovereigns learn, that mercy and magnanimity are the highest attributes of human policy as well of divine law ?

ART. IV. — *The Liberty of Rome : a History. With an Historical Account of the Liberty of Ancient Nations.*
By SAMUEL ELIOT. New York : G. P. Putnam. 1849.
2 vols. 8vo.

MR. ELIOT proposes to write the History of Liberty in a work of which the two volumes already published are but the beginning. Aside from the execution of his plan, there is something noticeable in the choice of the subject. It indicates of itself views of the progress of humanity so far original and just as to authorize the belief that they belong to no common mind. For the history of liberty must be the central history of mankind. Why, it may be asked, more than the history of civil government, of social or political civilization, of science or art, of philosophy, or, though last yet greatest, of religion ? Because all of these are but subservient to the progress of liberty ; they are all means to that end ; by its value are their value, by its advancement are their progress and efficiency, measured. But in saying this, we use the word liberty in a very high sense.

Freedom in some degree is the gift of God to all men. It is his first gift to them ; the condition precedent of all gifts,

and the means through which all others are given. The first and simplest form in which all men have it is in that personal free agency, against which, in most ages, a false philosophy, and, in some, a false religion, have contended with all the weapons of sophistry ; and have always found these weapons powerless before the irresistible and universal consciousness of the human soul. This consciousness does not tell us where our freedom comes from ; but it tells us that we possess it, and hold it inalienably. They who believe in God, who truly believe in Him — for it is not a true belief in Him which denies to Him His essential attributes — may, by very brief and decisive reasoning, be led to the conclusion, that human life is derivative, given by Him and flowing from Him ; and then the next conclusion is as easy, that we should be parts of another, should have no individuality, should not be ourselves, should not be men, if this life did not bear with it from its source, and keep with it as an eternal companion, this profound and unassailable conviction of free agency, of personal being. Nor is this sense a delusion, for then it would not be a gift worthy a God of truth. He makes it true, by giving us free agency in fact. There is never a moment when circumstances do not operate upon us, when various motives do not cause, and various influences do not affect, our conduct. But, at every moment, all these motives and influences are powerless unless they can act upon and through our own choice, our own will ; and the result to which they tend is always our own act.

The freedom of no man can be entirely destroyed without destroying him. But it may be checked, thwarted, controlled in its exercise, in a greater or less degree. As it is so, in that proportion are we the less, men. And, on the other hand, we grow into the full stature of humanity as we grow into the fulness and perfection of our freedom.

Thus, all pass through childhood ; and the great purpose of childhood is the preparation for manhood. We see of this only the little that is comprehended in what we call education. But within all this a great work of expansion and development is going on, and the result we call manhood. But in the beginning of life we are under perpetual control, and in a condition of perfect dependence. This is then necessary ; and the great purpose for which all the influences of childhood and early

life are gathered about it, is, to make this control and dependence unnecessary ; to build us up into the capacity of freedom ; for this depends necessarily upon our ability to use our freedom aright, because the good providence of God withholds it when it would be only weakness, danger, and ruin. The child longs ardently to be a man, that he may then be his own master ; for this is, to him, the ideal of happiness. The man longs as ardently to escape from whatever bondage clings about him ; for in his entire independence and freedom, he too sees the promise of all happiness ; and thus they both bear testimony to the truth, that freedom is the blessing which includes all others. But the man sees that the child asks for that which he is not ready to receive ; and if he be wise and truly kind, he withholds it, or measures it with careful adaptation to the child's ripeness for the gift. God knows that the man asks for that which he is not ready to receive, and because He is wise and kind, He also withholds or measures it. But the man — still supposing him to be a wise and good father — seeks to promote the maturity of the child ; gives him all the freedom which can be given with safety, and gives it with the hope that every gift may become the means of making another and a larger gift safe and possible. And our wisest and best Father in the same way deals with us all through life, and through the unending life which begins only on this side of death. For it is forever the one law of human life and human progress, that He who made us seeks to make us free, always more free, and is restrained only by the wisdom which perfectly discerns the measure in which we may, if we will, use this freedom for our own good ; and by the love which always regards this limitation.

Nor is this any more true of the individual than of the race. That, too, passes through its infancy and its childhood. And as the individual man grows gradually into greater freedom, and so into the receptivity of always greater gifts, which come when they can be received, so is it with the race. All things are intended and disposed by Providence *for* the progress of freedom. And this again is given that it may bring to us the greater gifts which progressive freedom shall make possible ; increase of knowledge, a better social life, higher art, purer, more instructive, and more influential religion.

For what is freedom, if it be not the unrestrained ability to possess, and to use as our own, and for our happiness, the gifts of God? Life is but the first of these; and the consciousness of individuality and free agency, and the hope and effort to enlarge and perfect these, are next in order and in worth; and on these, as on a broad and deep and eternal foundation, rest all the blessings which can be given to us by infinite love. For this, knowledge comes forth from the bosom of creation, and tells us of Him who in His laws reveals Himself; and with it grows our command over nature, and with it should grow our dominion over self; and with both will grow our liberation from the oppression, the suffering, the bondage which owe their being to ignorance or sin. For this, we are enabled to construct the political and social fabrics, and the myriads of mutual relations which connect — it may be, with chains of steel, and it may also be, with threads of golden light — all men with all their fellows. For this comes art, to stimulate and to feed the love of beauty; to awake imagination, and give to it glimpses and suggestions of a perfection too high and too remote for reason yet to grasp and measure, but near enough to kindle aspiration, endeavor, and hope. For art may be only sensuous, and still most beautiful and most seductive; but it is false to its own purpose, or fails to reach it, when it does not make us look upwards, and when it does not urge us forwards. And for this too comes religion; comes to sanctify all; to spread itself like an over-arching, all-embracing heaven, over all; and to convert all into the means of progress, development, and ascent. And when all these have accomplished their work; or rather, in proportion as the work is done, for revolving eternities will find it still beginning, — man is Free. He is free to receive life as it flows from the Source of life redundant and unchecked; free to hold all his capacities, and use them and enjoy them as his own; free to recognize as the laws which he obeys the truths of an infinite wisdom; free to acknowledge no master but the goodness of an infinite love. Far, very far, from us and all of us, is this result; and no efforts born of pride, or selfishness, or folly, or sin, will hasten its approach; but these evil things have no absolute dominion, and thitherward are we tending, step by step, led by our Maker's hand. Hith-

erward, one and all ; but the race and the individual equally under the condition, that we use the freedom that we have aright, and *so* make it the glad parent of greater freedom. And therefore in the history of man's freedom, shall we always read the central history of man.

Mr. Eliot, if we understand him aright, has undertaken to develop and illustrate the history of our race, by the history of freedom among its nations. To do this fully, and with all the detail these topics might permit, would require a work of almost boundless extent ; and in the volumes before us, and those which are to follow, the author proposes to do little more than sketch the outlines of his subject.

The history of liberty in Rome is prefaced by some chapters upon the history of liberty in India, Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Judea. It is difficult to present, in a brief space, his views of the progress of freedom among these nations ; but we will endeavor to do so. In India and Egypt, — for they are so much alike in this respect that they may be considered together, — the master and the tyrant against whom Liberty strove was superstition ; and the strife was ineffectual. Mr. Eliot supposes an earlier condition of mankind, — more free, more pure, and possessed of a peculiar civilization of which few or no distinct traces have come down to us. Before the beginning of authentic history, it had passed away. And at this beginning, we find despotic sovereigns, and a despotic priesthood, and these despotisms united for mutual support, and using the superstition of the people as the means of preserving their unlimited and oppressive sway.

But even in these ages, he finds evidence of wide, earnest, and enduring, but not successful, efforts after liberty ; and he finds this chiefly in the principles and history of Buddhism. This may be so ; and we are aware that Mr. Eliot's opinion is supported by high authority. If we do not misrecollect, Sir William Jones at one time held such views ; but we believe that he afterwards abandoned them. It is true, that nearly all we know of early and Indian Buddhism comes from enemies who had conquered them, and is doubtless misrepresented by their hatred and contempt. But, except in its hostility to castes, we see no clear traces of principles of freedom. And the passages which may be quoted from

Buddhist writers indicative of purer religion, may easily be paralleled from Brahminical writings; and both together prove only that the fading light of a brighter morning had not wholly passed away; that tradition had preserved some recollections, which, in a few minds, revived into almost their primitive purity and splendor. Buddhism was conquered in India long ages ago; but it went abroad, and has remained ever since, as a firmly rooted, if not dominant faith in Japan, Thibet, China, Burmah, and Ceylon; and we see in none of these nations any proof of its favoring the progress of freedom. And if this be explained, as it sometimes is, by supposing the early severance of its political from its theological character, this very severance only shows their slight connection. The theory of Ritter, that by their migration to Thrace through Colchis, the Buddhists founded the civilization of the Pelasgi, from whom the Greeks derived the germs of all existing culture, was once received with some favor, but is now abandoned.

But that such efforts, such struggles of nascent liberty, there were, we have no doubt, whether the distinct evidence is now within our reach or not. And so mankind advanced into the possibility of that somewhat better state of things which prevailed in Persia. Here, superstition is not a stern and immutable master. Liberty was called to encounter only the feeblener and less deadly hostility of political oppression. And the law of castes had lost its power. The institutions of Persia favored individual progress; men might make their way upwards in society; but the thought of political freedom was not born. The history of the nation is only the history of its rulers; for the people were their property, were mere incidents to them.

Not so is it in Greece. Here, for the first time, the people are foremost. Here, the history of the nation is the history of its peoples, and not of its kings and rulers. That men *might* be free, was conceded, at least as a possibility; not yet as a right; but freedom was henceforward to be something which all might desire, and the fortunate might win. The hope of it, the endeavor towards it, take part in all the conflicts of that history. If freedom itself was stifled in these conflicts, it did not die and leave no sign. For these very conflicts grew out of, and expressed, the rivalry of

newly awakened interests and rights, which, once aroused, were to slumber no more.

Of the history of Judea, in this connection, it can only be said, that its manifest purpose, implied indeed in the very word *theocracy*, is to substitute the dominion of God for the dominion of man, and, at the same time, to guard this from degenerating into that thralldom of idolatrous superstition which had for ages enslaved the eastern world. If this substitution were imperfect, if this guard were ineffectual, we have here but one more of the innumerable instances in which we see, that the coöperation of man with God is needed to develop the full value of His gifts, and that this coöperation, because it must be voluntary, may be withheld. And we see, too, that when it is withheld, and because man refuses to do his part, apparent failure and destruction follow, then, even in the midst of this and through it all, Providence works out great and abiding results which pass over to become the blessings of other members of the human family, and dwell with man forever.

Then came Rome, the universal conqueror. And this portentous history presents the three great questions, — How did this race so conquer, Why were they permitted so to conquer, and Why then decline, decay, and fall into such unmitigated ruin. All these questions, Mr. Eliot answers.

Over the infancy of Rome an impenetrable cloud still rests, in despite of the labor, learning, and ingenuity which have striven against it. Perhaps Mr. Eliot's view of the myths of its early history is a reasonable one; and it certainly has this in its favor, that it stands about half way between the extremes which would reject them altogether, or admit them as literal statements of actual facts. Amid this darkness, some things are seen with sufficient clearness to justify reasoning from them. The Romans were from the beginning warlike. Their rulers were not despots in the eastern and earlier way of sovereignty. There were families having great power, and perhaps the nation was at one time composed of them. The kingly power was hedged round by forms, by the distinct rights of large classes, and by privileges which penetrated society, and imparted to all but the slave a certain share of political power and liberty. There was no grinding, debilitating superstition; for this we

may say, although we cannot say what the religion of Rome was. With all this, and as a trait of national character new upon earth, there was an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of law, and of law as the express will of the state, which never died out in Rome, and which compelled the despotism, which at last overwhelmed all rights and interests, to observe with watchful and almost timid care all the forms and expressions which had once guarded liberty. Such was the beginning of Rome; and it was a good beginning for the cause of freedom. Successful wars added captured nations to their population. These were at first enslaved; and ages of conflict passed away, before the plebeians who represented these conquered nations acquired an equal liberty with the patricians who represented their conquerors. But these conflicts were conflicts for freedom, and the result was a conquest of freedom. And with freedom, the strength of the state grew. Its force was more easily put forth, and less easily resisted; and its conquests widened, until the sound of the Roman wars came back to Rome only as a distant echo.

The Romans had a work to do, and they did it well. They had to acquire the largest freedom then possible; and to use this freedom, and the strength it gave, in the conquest of the world. And the end was to be, that prostration of the heathen world and all its energies, that humiliation of the heathen mind and heart, which should make the spread of a new revelation possible; and therefore make the growth of a new and higher freedom — the child of this new revelation — also possible. Rome by her wide conquests made the world Roman. And when her own liberty had become corrupted into license, and then died, men felt as if there was no more hope, as if all that men could try had been tried, and all that men could do had been done, and it was all in vain. Among the writers of imperial Rome, there is a pervading expression of hopelessness, — stoical with some, and made almost beautiful by the stern pride of a Tacitus, and with many more putting on the aspect of utter indifference, or believing, with the followers of Epicurus, that the only wisdom left for man was to seek and enjoy the skilful and cautious luxury which took excellent care not to perish prematurely of excess. The human mind and character were thus made

ready for new gifts ; ready, at least, not to oppose them with an energy which might have been successful, not to choke them by strong adverse growths of its own. Then was our race as effectually prepared for a new dispensation, as ever a field — enriched by the decay of all to which it had formerly given sustenance, ploughed to its very depths, and moistened by tempests — was prepared to receive new seed. And then Christianity came down from Heaven.

The facts of the past are as meaningless as the letters of a child's alphabet thrown at hazard on the floor, until a recognition of providential government comes in to give them order and significance. Then they may arrange themselves into words full of instruction. The belief in a divine government implies a belief in a unity of purpose from the beginning, and in the prevalence of laws which have always regulated the development of humanity. Can we discover these laws ? Not yet perhaps. The acknowledgment that there are such laws, which lead towards a determinate end, is a great step forwards. And by grouping the facts of history, and looking carefully into their analogies, we may discover the laws of the science of history, as we do of other sciences.

Among these analogies is one which may at least be fancied between the growth of the race and that of the individual. When the biography of man shall be written — and until it is, history will not be written — perhaps we shall know, that periods analogous to infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, belong to humanity in the mass, as to each one of them who compose the mass. It is easy to fancy that we see its infancy in that earliest period alluded to by Mr. Eliot, towards which many traditions and some evidences point, when the golden age of the poets found upon earth nothing of the culture of subsequent ages, and little of their crimes or sorrows, but instead of these, a peace as calm as the smile of an infant. Of that age, history preserves nothing ; and the universal recollection, which places it as a gate of pearl at the entrance of every nation's history, is as dim and undefined, as sweet and pure, as the veiled memory which sometimes brings back to every man his own earliest years. Then, in the East, where history begins, began the childhood of our race ; and in its perfect and unreflecting obedience — for the thought of personal freedom seems not to have existed — in the institu-

tion of castes, which would be appropriate and good for them who were not ripe enough to be trusted with the choice of their own employments ; — in their literature, for the literature of eastern men comes to the nurseries and play-rooms of Europe and finds a fitting home there ; — and in many particulars of their religion, philosophy, and social life, to which we cannot pause even to allude, we may find much that becomes at once explicable and fitting, if we remember that we are looking on the childhood of humanity.

Then may we fancy that in Greece we have reached its youth. Mr. Eliot regards the love of the beautiful as the distinguishing characteristic of that nation ; but it seems to us a false ingenuity which would explain Sparta and Thermopylæ by a love of the beautiful. There are two passions of youth, both vehement and irrepressible, — the love of the beautiful and the love of combat. As yet untaught and undisciplined, the love of beauty is only of that external beauty which filled with the miracles of art that Athens of which a fine thinker said, that religion there was only one among the fine arts. And its love of combat was that love of fighting for its own sake which made Sparta a mere encampment, but could not make her a great conqueror. Athens and Sparta were Greece, because they impersonated these two great passions of untamed youth.

And then Alexander, who seems almost the incarnation of the Grecian character, conquered the East. With him was Aristotle, who conquered the eastern mind, and began that system of exact and methodical inquiry and knowledge, which has never since permitted the old oriental sublimity and obscurity to be what it once was, the religion, philosophy, and poetry of mankind all in one.

And so was our race prepared for the coming of its manhood ; for Rome. There was an energy not less vigorous than that of Greece, but strengthened by the foresight, the persistence, and the guidance of the present by a steady look to a far future, which are not the attributes of youth, and were not of Greece. It went forth step by step, and in its centuries conquered a dominion but little wider than Alexander won in twelve years, but a dominion that lasted its centuries, and slowly fell.

And here our fancy is exhausted, and this same analogy

fails, unless we look upon the feudal ages as the decline of this period, and upon ourselves, who are witnessing the last dying throes of feudal institutions, as living at the close of one great cycle of humanity, or rather at the beginning of another, which may also have its youth, its manhood, and its decline. This fancy will be welcome to many, because it tells us, that we constitute and are, as it were, the beginning of an era ; and that in this country, man is to begin to live anew. And national vanity will be flattered by remembering the fact, which, however inexplicable, is at least as undeniable, that from the beginning, the course of empire has ever been westward. From the East to Greece, thence to Rome, and thence to the western shores of an old world, where it waited until a new one should be discovered ; and then, bounding over the ocean, the dominion of the world, or the chief seat of those principles which are to be henceforth sovereign throughout the world, is to be established in the new home that is now limited in the east and west only by the two great oceans of the globe. Then will it have completed its circuit, and at its next remove must return to the place of its beginning. Very easy is it to indulge such fancies as these ; still easier is it, to nurse the vanity and self-complacency for which such fancies are the fitting nutriment. Suppose them to be true, or to have some foundation of truth ; suppose that with our nation a new era begins, characterized by the possession of a completed liberty ; of that blessing for which blood and tears have freely flowed in all ages, and which has ever stood before the eyes of struggling and suffering humanity, as the end for which it was well to strive and suffer to the last limit of endurance, — as the hope which was great enough to sustain the courage of mankind through perpetual conflict, and to cheer them through the strife and the pain of their pilgrimage. What then ? Why do we forget that, before we learn how to use this blessing, coming generations must pass through a new — perhaps a far more wasting and desolate — series of efforts and of conflicts, of errors and of punishments. That liberty has come to mankind at last, so large that it can be made no larger, is certain. That we are unprepared for it, that we are in danger of making enormous mistakes in relation to it, that we shall strive to make it the slave of selfishness until bitter suffering shall teach us and

succeeding ages better things by long and oft repeated admonitions, seems now to thinking men, we believe, generally, at least as certain.

Of the moral tone of Mr. Eliot's work we cannot speak too highly. From the beginning to the end it is profoundly religious ; but upon no page and in no sentence, is there a word of cant. The very idea and purpose of the book were inspired by a deep conviction of providential government, and by a belief which is borne like a torch through the mazes of the past,—that every occurrence was caused or permitted for an end, and would teach us that end if our ears were open to the lesson. There are those who will complain of the author's enthusiasm ; that it never masters him, that strong as it is, a stronger reason ever goes with it, and that it never degenerates into wild phantasy, will not excuse it with such readers, nor would we blame them very heartily ; for an honest and earnest, yet rational, enthusiasm is so rare in these days, that one may be pardoned who believes it impossible.

The learning employed in this work, gathered for it and exhibited in it, is very remarkable. The notes show a very wide reading, and a power of getting aid and illustration from the most improbable quarters. Before we read the work, we observed the quantity of notes, and the variety of reference, and a suspicion arose that there was some parade in this. But it soon passed away. There is no display ; but in all sincerity, the acquisitions of years of well-directed industry are brought—fairly and without violence—into the service of the writer. Indeed, in some of the notes, interesting topics are touched too lightly, and apparently from the fear, that if more were said, the author might seem to *try* to make the most of them.

The great fault of the book is its obscurity ; and it is a very great fault. It seems to arise from two causes. The views and thoughts are often very original, and have not yet been matured in the mind of the author. It is unfortunate for the book, that a part has been thus published prematurely ; for we believe that if it had been kept until, through years of study and investigation, the work had been finished, this beginning would have been re-written in the light of the whole. But we are not sure that it is unfortunate for the author. He has won a high place in the literature of our country. He has

produced a work which implies a combination of uncommon abilities, of great industry, and of a very singular capacity for unflinching devotion to a great purpose. The approbation he has received, and must receive, will sustain him. He will go on, and complete his work ; of that, if he lives we have no doubt ; and just as little, that every step which he takes will be a step in advance.

But it is obscure for another reason ; and that is, a style very faulty, or rather very often faulty, in this respect. It is not direct enough ; it is often allusive and suggestive, precisely where the author should speak most plainly — should *labor* to speak plainly. There will be a series of facts and observations, intelligible enough, and then a paragraph summing up the results, which it is hard to understand. Take, for instance, the following paragraph, which we have not selected, but found by opening the book almost at hazard. Others may easily be pointed out more obscure, and many others far less so ; and this would be plainer, if read in its proper connection ; but as it is, it will serve to show our meaning :

“ At the same time that the growth of society was helped by the rivalry and activity amongst the nations of Greece, its natural offspring was conceived. The lower orders not only became of consequence to the higher, but, as warfare continued and civilization dilated, they rose, themselves, towards and to the higher, while new classes were brought from hitherto silent shores to cover the ocean upheaving with strength and hope. Henceforth the fitness of man for freedom was determined ; and beings trampled in the dust, above which they were supposed incapable to lift their faces, much more their souls, were recognized as having their portion, also, in humanity. It must be plainly added, that these were results in their beginning only ; but the beginning was the boon most desirable to mankind. The course of ancient history brightens with increasing liberty ; yet liberty, though the inspiration of progress, was, as we may see hereafter, the forerunner of that humiliation in which heathenism departed and Christianity appeared.” — Vol. I. p. 111.

There is often great beauty in a suggestive style ; but it is when one thing, whether thought or fact, is presented with perfect clearness, but the thing itself, or the manner of its presentation, suggests many other things. But a suggestive style is very bad, which *only* suggests. How few writers, how very few readers, are aware of the potent charm of a

perfectly direct and transparent style. A very large part of Prescott's fame, which seems now to be as well established in England as at home, rests upon his merit in this respect. You do not stop to admire its brilliancy, or its force, or precision, or any other excellence; you do not stop at all; you are borne along by the gentle current of his language, and give yourself up to the pleasure of such progress. It is indeed so pleasant to glide along a clear stream which breaks only into smiles, that the happy voyager sometimes sees great beauty in what is often but the very common scenery of the banks. We do not of course mean that Prescott thus seduces us into undeserved admiration; but we began the figure — which is, after all, rather a poor one, — for the purpose of saying, that be the beauty of the shores never so great and never so new, one must be a passionate lover of the picturesque who can appreciate it fully, while his course is tortuous and interrupted, and sometimes he is compelled to take the oar and work his passage. There are many sentences in Mr. Eliot's book which we have studied with some diligence, and are now by no means sure that we understand them.

And this is provoking, because it is so entirely his own fault, or at least, a misfortune easily avoided. Indeed, it lessens as you go on, and the last half of his second volume is, in addition to its other merits, almost easy reading. But we say it is entirely his own fault, because he labors under nothing like disability in the matter of style. It is generally rich, glowing, and impressive; and there are many passages, and long ones too, of which the beauty is high and consummate, and wholly unimpaired. But instead of talking more about the style of this work, let us give our readers an opportunity to judge for themselves. And for this purpose, we give them the closing chapter.

Before quoting it, however, let us sum up the opinions we have somewhat discursively expressed. This work is singularly learned, full of original and important views and valuable instruction, perfect in its moral and religious tone, and generally beautiful, sometimes extremely beautiful, in style. But the thoughts are occasionally immature, and give the impression, that with all the author's zeal and industry they have not yet been fully studied; and the work is marred

by a prevailing obscurity which will impair, not merely its popularity, but its usefulness. Indeed, it will never be a favorite work with the many who love to read, but cannot think ; but they who read that they may think, will use this book, and prize it.

“ The view from which our steps are bearing us away is such as we may well be glad to leave. A few scattered palaces, wherein we would not willingly look again, rise amongst a mass of hovels, of which the doors are closed against us, upon a plain grim with devastation and sterility. The cheerful voice of the husbandman is changed to the outcry of the soldier or the wail of the slave ; while the earth itself, as if saddened and speechless, denies a place to the waving corn, and bears, it seems, no tree or leaf to hear the murmurs of the wind. Above the plain, a mountain, diademed with clouds, and barren as the fields beneath, supports a single edifice, which, whether it be a residence or a fortress, is equally magnificent and dreary. Here dwells the master, and below him, on the plain, are the subjects of the Roman Empire.

“ The prospect to which we turn, at first, is not more gladsome. Without a people, and, a few rare instances excepted, without a ruler that deserves the name, the Empire appears to sink deeper and deeper in the wickedness and feebleness it has inherited. Years pass, and centuries ; and as they one by one depart from Rome, her fortitude and hope are not only extinguished, but forgotten. The despotism of the Emperor is the judgment upon the Empire. The hollowness of the Empire, like “ an empty urn,” becomes fit for the “ withered hands ” of the Emperor by whom it is held. And the onslaught of the barbarians, at last, is the retribution to which the Emperor, the Empire, and the parent Commonwealth have been long foredoomed. The glimpses before or behind us, that we catch of Rome alone, are all alike mournful.

“ In every country and amongst every nation of the ancient world, a marvellous progress from barbarism to comparative civilization or from servitude to comparative freedom had been allowed to precede the decline to each appointed in its turn. The extent of this advancement was generally commensurate with the degree of liberty existing amongst the various races engaged in its production ; and the greatest development of knowledge and of cultivation occurred in Greece, together with the greatest development of liberty. A different phase appears to be observable in Rome, under whose laws liberty attained to a greater stature than in any other heathen state, without producing a corres-

ponding increase in the sciences, the arts, or the comforts of mankind. The same religion that had interposed itself like a cloud between the freedom of other nations and the light from Heaven hung thinnest above the seven hills ; and yet nowhere was the liberty it always obscured so fatal to human works and to human hopes as amongst the proud and finally the lawless conquerors who were trained at Rome.

“Here lies the moral of our history. In the great creation of which we form a part, the process of animation and increase is the result of mutual, though they be unconscious, services amongst its members. The plant subsists upon the breath of the animal, and the animal seeks from the plant those exhalations without which its own life would be intolerable. It is one of the thousand instances with which the world is filled to teach men how to conduct themselves and how to employ their principles ; and it may serve, at this moment, as an illustration of the truth, that liberty is virtually servitude, unless it be so connected with human powers as to minister to them and be ministered unto by them in return. The institutions of ancient Rome secured to all the citizens whom they acknowledged the amplest freedom in that age possible ; yet freedom failed amongst them for want of higher powers in its possessors than those of conquerors and rulers ; while the institutions by which this liberty had been provided were bowed and broken by its courses of blood and despotism. The few, like the Gracchi and Cicero, whom it educated to greater aspirations were not allowed to spread the learning they acquired amongst men, much less to exercise the benevolence they had received from their Creator.

“The wants of the Romans are as evident as their errors. They not only lacked the powers, but the first necessities, of humanity. To be free, they needed to be conscious of their weakness as individuals, and, mortally speaking, as a nation ; a consciousness which never came to the nation, and only to its individual members in the day of their utter downfall. Even had they been sooner humbled, a law of right and wrong would still have failed them ; though in order to be free, singly or collectively, they required liberation from the vice and fortification in the virtue of the world. This law, however, was never theirs ; it neither rose with their early institutions nor arrived with their later philosophy, except in part ; and the part even which they did obtain was lost before the beginning of the Empire. Without this knowledge of right and wrong, there can be no true power ; and without power, again, there can be no real exercise of liberty. There is a holiness of freedom yet to be attained in doing ‘ whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things

are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report'; and so doing them, that the glory of God, which religion commands, may be fulfilled by man through liberty.

"So far as humility amongst men was necessary for the preparation of a truer freedom than could ever be known under heathenism, the part of Rome, however dreadful, was yet sublime. It was not to unite, to discipline, or to fortify humanity, but to enervate, to loosen, and to scatter its forces, that the people whose history we have read were allowed to conquer the earth and were then themselves reduced to deep submission. Every good labor of theirs that failed was, by reason of what we esteem its failure, a step gained nearer to the end of the wellnigh universal evil that prevailed; while every bad achievement that may seem to us to have succeeded, temporarily or lastingly, with them was equally, by reason of its success, a progress towards the good of which the coming would have been longed and prayed for, could it have been comprehended. Alike in the virtues and in the vices of antiquity, we may read the progress towards its humiliation. Yet, on the other hand, it must not seem, at the last, that the disposition of the Romans or of mankind to submission was secured solely through the errors and the apparently ineffectual toils which we have traced back to these times of old. Desires too true to have been wasted, and strivings too humane to have been unproductive, though all were overshadowed by passing wrongs, still gleam as if in anticipation or in preparation of the advancing day.

"At length, when it had been proved by ages of conflict and loss that no lasting joy and no abiding truth could be procured through the power, the freedom, or the faith of mankind, the angels sang their song, in which the glory of God and the goodwill of men were together blended. The universe was wrapped in momentary tranquillity, and 'peaceful was the night' above the manger at Bethlehem. We may believe, that, when the morning came, the ignorance, the confusion, and the servitude of humanity had left their darkest forms amongst the midnight clouds. It was still, indeed, beyond the power of man to lay hold securely of the charity and the regeneration that were henceforth to be his law; and the indefinable terrors of the future, whether seen from the West or from the East, were not at once to be dispelled. But before the death of the Emperor Augustus, in the midst of his fallen subjects, the Business of THE FATHER had already been begun in the Temple at Jerusalem; and, near by THE SON was increasing in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

"The sea, as it were, upon which wave has pursued wave through day and night, through years and centuries, before our

eyes, is thus illumined with the approaching light which we have been waiting to behold. And as we stand upon the shore, conscious of the spirit that has moved upon the face of the waters, we may lift our eyes with more confiding faith to the over-watching Heaven."

ART. V. — *Lectures on Subjects connected with Literature and Life*. By EDWIN P. WHIPPLE, Author of "Essays and Reviews." Boston: W. D. Ticknor & Co. 1850. 12mo. pp. 218.

MR. WHIPPLE may now fairly be called the most popular essayist in this country; and he has substantial merits which go far to justify the favor with which his writings have been received. To a large acquaintance with English literature, a prompt and retentive memory, a lively fancy, and considerable wit, he joins the brisk and smart exuberance of style which is the most agreeable quality of the essayist, and the most essential to his success. His command of expression is almost marvellous; he showers words upon the page with a prodigality that astonishes the lean and bare scribblers who, after painful search and with many contorsions, clothe their shivering thoughts in scant and inappropriate garments. He revels in the abundance of his wealth, and changes his rich costume so frequently and swiftly, that the reader begins to think he is playing tricks with dress, or is substituting words for thought. Yet the suspicion would be groundless. The expression, though lavish and ornate, is almost invariably clear, pointed, and precise. Because he has a large store to choose from, the word selected is just the appropriate word, conveying the precise idea that the writer wishes to impart, without distortion or indistinctness. Mr. Whipple's essays, therefore, form easy and luxurious reading. We are not obliged to pause and dwell upon a sentence before we can detect its meaning, or discern its connection with what precedes and what follows in the train of thought.

The essayist does not aim at complete and elaborate inves-